Clearly, it is far better if the potential for disaffection is diffused, rather than being allowed to concentrate to the point where it triggers physical action.

The concentration of disaffection is difficult unless individual disaffected people can come together, face to face, in mutual reinforcement: it is difficult to raise any real lather over the telephone. Concentrated disaffection is therefore easier to avoid if the population is physically dispersed, at least for most of the time. The suburbs, whose rationale we have already discussed in terms of consumption, are very effective environment for creating this diffusion; particularly as they gradually come to contain larger and larger proportions of smaller and smaller households. The one-person household (one of the fastest-growing sizes) in the suburbs is clearly the *most* diffused dwelling arrangement, short of the prison cell, which anyone has yet managed to conceive.

This diffusion can, in principle, be overcome by people meeting in public space, even in the suburbs; though low densities make it relatively difficult to achieve large gathering in any spontaneous way. This difficulty is increased if the public space itself is fragmented and diffused: recent suburban morphologies, structured around “courts" and "culs de sac", are far more diffused, in this sense, than were either street-oriented versions. In this context, public space becomes merely a quantitative concept - so many acres per thousand people, say - rather than being conceived for ready and spontaneous public use. This effect is in most cases reinforced, at a symbolic level, by the space's lack of visual definition: a characteristic which makes it difficult to perceive public space as anything positive, rather than merely as the negative "residue" of the buildings.

The late capitalist city, typically with an ever-growing proportion of suburban environment, is therefore quite effective as a people-diffusing structure. But, of course, individuals can still come face to face in work situations, and in downtown shopping and entertainment environments. However, none of these is very effective as an environment for public assembly. In the workplace, as we have seen, individual workers are most often involved in a rigorous division of labour, and are subject to a highly-structured system of supervision. Even in intensively- used city centres, there is an increasing tendency for major "public" spaces - such as shopping malls - to be privately- owned, and subject to continuous security patrols. Opportunities for spontaneous public assembly can never be eliminated altogether, but certainly they are made more difficult by the morphological changes which have occurred in the late-capitalist city.

To work well, in this regard, it is important that users should not become too-easily aware of this aspect of urban design. The imagery of the building surfaces may have the potential to obscure the "social control" aspect of these morphological changes. With this in mind it is no surprise, for example, to see that so many suburban housing developments are styled-up to give the impression of matey village communities. At all levels from its spatial structure to the details of style, the built environment has gradually been restructured as a non-violent system for diffusing the potential for rebellion.

These rather broad-ranging thoughts - reassuring or disturbing, depending on one’s political perspective - bring to a conclusion our rough sketch of how the built environment can support the operation of the capitalist system at a number of levels. To explore the complexities of the capitalist development process, it has been helpful to consider three of these levels as conceptually separate; but in practice most elements of the built environment operate across more than one of these three. For example, at one level, a factory or an office block is clearly a commodity for sale. At another, however, both are important supports for different kinds of production processes. Or, again, a suburban house is itself produced as a saleable commodity; but it is also a component in an overall system for increasing the consumption of all sorts of other commodities, and for diffusing social tensions.

Ian Bentley, co-chairperson, Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, Great Britain

Drago KOS

Structuring of Spatial Policies

Most debates on spatial policies tend to overlook the fact that it is an extremely complex, even eclectic concept, which is:

a) horizontally structured; on the national level there is a definite "spatial" department, however other “non-spatial" departments have a definite and strong influence on "real" spatial policy - especially infrastructure departments can (un)willingly prejudice spatial development.
b) vertically structured, despite the reform of local self-government, which took many formal competences in the execution of spatial policies from the new municipalities, the local unit, at least informally, managed to maintain influence on spatial policy. For these two reasons it is difficult to discuss spatial policy without defining Which segments we have in mind.

The ensuing debate is an attempt at presenting different factors which influence the dynamic structuring of spatial policies. The result is an often unpleasant eclecticism, which can, with much difficulty, be harmonised with impressions of vertically and horizontally logically structured spatial policies. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to act otherwise, than to understand and respect these "un-systematic" effects.

Tensions which exist between the national (central government) and lower tiers (regional, local) are probably a normal phenomenon, which doesn't necessarily lead to conflict. When it leads to a rise in sensitivity of the national apparatus, it can even be beneficial because it produces a greater sensitivity of national institutions to the complexities and variations at the regional or local levels. Although *centralist* doesn't immediately equate to *undemocratic,* it is not surprising that authoritative undemocratic systems are more centralist and therefore do not permit translations of power from the central to the lower tiers. Vice-versa, decentralisation and democracy also don't coincide, although most democratic arrangements permit distribution of power and regulative competences to lower territorial units.

An inevitable complementary effect of spatial de-centralisation are occasional, as well as constant tensions between different tiers. For this reason itself, changes in competences are a delicate process, which can in the long run destabilise political and administrative procedures.

Physical planning and spatial policies are very suitable fields or even 'privileged areas' for the escalation of tensions between central and local 'government'. Reasons for such occurrences can be sought in two directions.

The Territorial aspect

'Competition' for control over space is, more or less, the hidden primary concern of any government. In Slovenia we also have to deal with special conditions, which are primarily the consequence of radical institutional re-organisation of relations between the national and local levels. Despite numerous forecasts, which declared, that the physical aspect is losing in significance, it isn't difficult to understand why these arguments didn't convince the local governments. Inherently each political elite at any level tries to gain in competence, i.e. increase its power. Such endeavour is largely 'independent' of any rational, sensible assessment of dividing power between the national and local level.

However, the fact remains, that the physical space, despite different forecasts, is still one of the basic, almost archetype instruments and motives of government. Similarly, planning and management or spatial policies are an adequate field for 'promoting' competitiveness between different tiers of power or areas.

A good illustration of these viewpoints, concerning desired competences of the local level, are findings of the research Constituting new municipalities (Kos, 1995). The research included all of the most important function bearers of the new municipalities in Slovenia (mayors, deputy mayors, presidents and vice-presidents of municipal councils). Their attitudes clearly show a definite desire for more competences and also the variety of activities which local government should influence, especially answers to the question in which fields of activity should municipalities have more competences? For example, primary education 41.6 %, physical planning 94.2 %, sewers 69.1 %.

A strong tendency for allocation of competences to the local level is evident. Symptomatically, it is strongest where physical planning is concerned. Slightly less 'localist' are answers to the question At which level should be the emphasis in competence over certain matters?

Division of competences between different tiers is a classic tension point. Even though we know, that these are the answers of new local political elite's; the tendency or desire for eliminating central control is surprising. According to the answers, only provision of energy seems to be an undoubtedly national matter, while elsewhere, the powers of the central government should **be** diminished. The fact, that more than 75 % of leading individuals in the new municipalities are dissatisfied with the present division of competences implies, that even in the future this will **be** one of the most important topics of the rapport between the central government and the municipalities.

The Environmental aspect

The second set of arguments, which repeatedly point out the importance of space for local governments, stem from environmental issues. Threats to the environment are in fact always local. Environmental consequences are always detected in a concrete locality, whatever the reason or source. A definite fact is also, that the sensitivity of the global as well as local public is growing and that environmental protection is one of the (few) remaining topics with a mobilising force (also Kos 1993,1994; Gantar, 1993; Toš, 1993; Kos/Gantar 1989).

Based on these and many other sources it is possible to understand that local public opinion often partially, i.e. localistically, responds to environmental issues. Conflicts which occur when environmentally delicate projects are grafted into real places consistently cause greater and greater opposition and rifts between the general and local public opinion. It corresponds to the rift between local and national governmental tiers.

Local rejection of supra-local projects opens some basic problems, which are definitely not new. A novelty are their intensities. For many reasons, of which the least important isn't the contemporary practice of moving environmental and thus spatially demanding affairs into less developed i.e. passive areas, these problems are gaining in impetus. Solving these problems is definitely harder because of the ‘decay of traditional hierarchy' and even more so because of the inevitable arbitrarily specified relationship between the local (regional) and national tier. At this point we do not wish to discuss the suitability of local responses to environmental challenges, but to point out a possible question, which is a potentially powerful and omni-present source of 'conflict' between different governmental tiers.

The Local Reality

Although 'usual' differences in spatial management occur in any system or in policies at different governmental tiers, we believe, that the mentioned anomalies are not a coincidence or a consequence of 'eccentric' views of local elite's. A special relationship between the national and local level in Slovenia is almost traditional. However pathetic it may sound, we could say, that it is historically deep-rooted. In the continuation we will present some sets of factors, which should be taken into consideration when discussing this topic.

Unconsolidated institutional structure

The main reason fora 'special dimension' in relations between the central government and the local level is definitely the already mentioned fact, that the young country hasn't as yet managed to consolidate its institutional structure. The most important source of instability, which has recognisable spatial effects, is the reform of local self-government. According to views of municipal leaderships, existing local boundaries are still 'rather unstable'. In numerous municipalities there are still initiatives for changing territorial boundaries (Kos, 1995:12). This definitely poorly thought out administrative operation, coupled with inaccurate priorities, has definitely very radically intervened in the relations between the central government and the local units. One has to bear in mind, that the new Law on Local Self-government not only changed the territorial arrangements but also transferred many local competences to the national tier.

Inter-level inclarity and poor definition

Because of the inclarity of the reform, the formal, institutional position and actual role of ’remnants' of the previous arrangement is also unclear, which also has 'spatial' implications. In particular this applies to local communities. These units are in some places still quite active and are fighting for survival.

Because of their undefined position, they are trying to perform 'autonomous[1] (spatial) policies. Another effect are the attempts and initiatives for creating new municipalities. Even more important is the raised question about the 'intermediate' level, i.e. non-existence of the region or preparations for the creation of regions. The question has been open all along, since the new Constitution was adopted. In reality, the regional component in physical planning has always been present, although it was never institutionalised.

Localist policies (political parties)

The fact that political parties don't have a very long tradition also contributes to the creation of uncoordinated local 'spatial policies' or at least inconsistent physical planning guidelines at the local level. In this context the constellation of parties in power is important, especially whether the arrangement of political power at the local level coincides with the national level. Differences in spatial policies between the 'centre and periphery' are of course more probable, if the relations between different political parties differ on both levels.

Traditional de-centralisation of Slovenia

It is possible to understand the creation of different spatial policies as a consequence of the traditional or historically conditioned 'de-centralisation' of the Slovenian territory. With respect to some peculiarities it is possible to state, that the previous system, where physical planning is concerned, was also rather de-centralised, even more, poly-centrism was the leading spatial policy for a long time. However widespread the present 'social amnesia' is, the effects of the long-standing directive are still alive and together with traditional and some postmodernist or post-socialist factors cause synergetic effects towards de-centralisation.

Variety of physical environments

The variety of spatial policies coincides with the actual variety of the physical environment in Slovenia. The four basic physical types of the environment and complementary sub-types generate numerous spatial and co-relational social phenomena, such as: architectural types, settlements, land-use as well as more complex social-spatial identities. Such a variety undoubtedly makes mono-centric management, planning or coordination of occurrences in the physical environment highly inoperative. A modern state or national administration can manage such complexity, however our concern is the true 'abnormal' diversity of the physical environment, which inherently promotes different local and regional identities and generates different spatial policies or at least directions.

Unequal development

Among the sources of different spatial policies are also developmental disparities. We believe, that this problem is somewhat underestimated and that the 'consolidation' of central - national institutions will increase the magnitude of the problem. The differences between developed and underdeveloped areas and corresponding differences in spatial policies will most probably be manifested in the physical environment. It is also possible to predict complications caused by differences between traditional development approaches towards modernisation, which are environmentally 'insensitive' and 'postmodern' approaches, which include a high level of respect for environmental qualities.

Poor communication or traffic infrastructure

An important source of diversity in spatial policies is poor communication, i.e. connectivity of different areas. This aspect is specially brought forward, because differences between the central and local tiers concerning 'communication (traffic) policies are in the forefront of public interest or rather mass-media coverage. On a number of occasions 'local policies' actually changed the 'national policy', e.g. in determining national communication (traffic) priorities. The prevailing attitudes of Slovenes to motorisation were a distinct motivating factor for enforcing different road and spatial policies for the modernisation of the road infrastructure.

Crossborder influences

Crossborder influences are a distinct source of tension as well, especially today when border controls are lax, thus supra-national dimensions of international integration will definitely influence the national spatial policy. The fact is, that the territories surrounding Slovenia offer many larger and smaller urban centres which should be taken into account when analysing factors which affect the formulation or effectiveness of different spatial policies. Even more so because these centres already performed historic gravitational and political functions for separate parts of the present state. The most important factor affecting present spatial policies are the policies of the largest European group, i.e. The European Union. The mentioned circumstances definitely strengthen tendencies for centralisation and resulting localist responses.

'Informal' political and legal culture

Last but not least is the specific political culture, which still nurtures the tradition of 'informality' and even illegal intervention in the physical environment. On the individual level it is manifested by building without necessary permits (a process which is impossible to control), while on the local (municipal) level this specific spontaneity, manifests itself as 'instinctive* opposition to national, i.e. formalised physical changes or as opposition to time consuming and rather complicated legal procedures. The 'informal' culture of interventions in the physical environment on the local level is also a consequence of the fact that on the local level, it is even more difficult (than on the national level) to consistently abide by concrete, formal and legal procedures.

Alongside these specific conditions it is necessary to understand other universal factors which affect different 'spatial policies'. On the local level entrepreneurial (capital) intervention is in the forefront because there it can directly or more decisively influence physical changes or locational conditions for realising its interests. In particular areas an important role is played by non-governmental organisations or civil mobility groups. Another universal factor is the mentioned 'new localism' phenomenon, which in Slovenian circumstances in fact isn't a novelty.

Because of all these special conditions as well as numerous fundamental changes and because the process of consolidation of the governmental structure concerning changes to the physical environment hasn't as yet been completed, it is not difficult to understand the efforts of many local elite’s to strengthen or 'revitalise' the competences of the local tier. In this discussion however, we did not evaluate whether their

claims are justifiable or not. Based on our findings, we believe that local spatial policies will be devised 'spontaneously' and that they will not necessarily correspond to national interests. The general trend, coined 'New localism' (Strassoldo, 1994), will only strengthen the phenomenon.

The itemised sets of factors is not a definite list, since other factors also cause inconsistency and redundancy of spatial policies and actually prevent the implementation of legal and legitimate strategies or directions of physical changes. The text is an attempt at presenting numerous and varied effects, which inevitably cause lesser or greater diversions thus frustrating the efforts of planners. Nevertheless, we have to be aware of the fact that even the most consistent spatial policy, in the process of structuring, deviates from the desired model. In reality this means that it is worthwhile to retreat from ideal-typical images and accept incrementalist kneading and molding.

English sources promote the phrase 'muddling through' (Dror, 1967)... *into the planned or desired direction,* which can be a very tiresome enterprise. However, because of the ever-growing multitude of factors, which influence the structuring of spatial policies, there are already no other feasible possibilities. In the future the number of possibilities will be even smaller.

Dr. Drago Kos, Ph.D., sociologist, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana

For literature and sources see page 18.

Alenka FIKFAK Alma ZAVODNIK

The City # Cyberspace: New Dimensions of Urbanity, as Contrast to the Information Highway or its Continuation

1. Introduction

Urbanism doesn't exist; it is merely an ideology in Marx's sense of experiencing the world. But architecture really exists, like Coca Cola - a term soaked in ideology. It is a real product, a false satisfaction for a false necessity. Urbanism is comparable to economic programming of Coca Cola -a truly spectacular ideology. Modern capitalism which has had influence on the reduction of social living, on the spectacle, is incapable of anything other than showing the spectacle of our own alienation. Its dreams of urbanity are its masterpiece.[1]

We are living in the period of the post-industrial, information society. New technologies, a new information culture and systems of telecommunication enable an individual way of living. The agricultural system which generated traditional patterns of utilisation and settling has disintegrated long ago. New elements creeping into the settlement structure are often already the predominant motive and have in reality established a new, individual complex system. We cannot evaluate the new condition, nor master it within the traditional value systems.

In the article we wish to draw attention to occurrences in space, which are a consequence of dynamic currents' uninterrupted activity in the process of a constant evolution, that direct us to understand cities and space in time, which is a temporary component. Simultaneously as thoughts are being written down, space is changing too.

2. About the Beginning ...

The steam-engine was the most important invention in the last century that had a revolutionary influence on transport possibilities and increased the movement of masses in speed, distance and extent... quick development and drive had grown from the desire of connecting cities... industry: mass building and railway.[2]

The first major changes in the structures of cities occurred in the second half of the 19th century with the industrial revolution. The development of new urban functions (new means of production and transport, new materials) were provoked by the pressure of the ever increasing number of immigrants into cities. Population accumulated, but the existing structure was not capable of bearing the pressure of the great mass. The once stable structures of medieval and baroque cities began to disintegrate.

Technical progress and innovations enabled mass production. Individual work was substituted by serial production. The expansion of new professional activities and bureaucracy brought on the emergence of a new social society, which was formed around two vital values: capitalism, as a direct consequence of quick progress, and socialism, as a progressive expression of a new social and economic awareness.

Social changes which began with the new conditions of living began to be reflected in the physical structures of cities. The urban envelope was spreading more and more rapidly with the new districts which began spilling over the open space. They were organised on an orthogonal grid, owing to an ever increasing exploitation of space. Construction was poor, lacking basic hygienic quarters, according to the principle "roof over head". The emergence and meaning of the described changes depended on the development of industrialisation of society. The processes were first noticed in Great Britain in 1801 following a population census. The figures clearly exposed a quantitative development of the industrialised society.[3] As a consequence, aspirations for understanding cities and improving the existing conditions emerged. Numerous associations were established, the first being The Royal Commission for Health and Housing in Great Britain, whose task was to improve health and hygienic conditions in cities.

These initiatives followed the ideas of theoreticians and Utopians, Owen and Fourier, on the organic nature of small industrial forms of settlements: open space for an ideal new society in harmony with the environment. In this atmosphere, an important role was played by E. Howard. His concept of a "Garden City of Tomorrow" was based on a systematic emigration of population to smaller cities erected in a pleasant natural environment. These were to substitute the existing industrial cities. The garden city is based on a concept that stems from a figurative scheme of concentric circles of individual categories of activities in which there is a social division of work and space - a hierarchy that prevents city growth, but basically from negating the existing structure of cities.